

Providential Perspective

Vol. 15, No. 2 March 2000

The Teaching Journal of *The Providence Foundation*

The Principle Approach

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The material in this *Perspective* is excerpted from the book *A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School, the Principle Approach*. Jim Rose is the primary writer and editor of this work, which also contains sections by numerous other educators who have been involved in the Principle Approach for many years. To obtain a copy of this invaluable book use the enclosed order form or contact our offices.

What is the Principle Approach to American Christian education and government, and how is this approach distinguished from other methods?

Just as God gave the Old Testament with its Moral Law and rules to govern Moses and the children of Israel—a comprehensive body of laws or principles by which they could direct their personal and national lives, and determine the rightness or wrongness of their choices and actions—so God gave the “whole counsel” of both the Law and the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile for the salvation and direction of all men and nations.

As God’s eternal Word was translated into the English Bible, our American Christian forefathers discovered therein not only the way of salvation through Christ Jesus but the Biblical truths, laws or principles by which they too could direct or govern their individual and public lives; and they reasoned from these spiritual principles to determine everything from the right kind of education to

the right form of government for America.

In its contemporary meaning, the Principle Approach refers to the re-discovery and re-statement of the historic truths or principles of God’s Word on which the *character* of our original peace, order, liberty and prosperity, both individually and corporately, were built. It refers also to the Christian method of reasoning from the Holy Bible (the proper and primary authority concerning our view or philosophy of life and living), and how to comprehend all subjects, inclusive of education and government in the home, church, school and society.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle. (2 Thessalonians 2:15)

America’s traditional Biblical principles were first restored and explained in *Teaching and Learning America’s Christian History — The Principle Approach* by Rosalie J. Slater. It summarizes this approach in seven key principles which may be concisely rendered as follows:

1. *God’s Principle of Individuality* declares God’s infinite individuality and diversity, and reveals that God created distinct and unique identities consistent with His nature and character. It exposes the error not only of secular collectivism but of any individualism separate from Christ.
2. *The Christian Principle of Self-Government* shows that man’s capacity for governing himself, then his family, city, state and nation depends upon man’s obedience to “the spirit of the law of Christ” in each

expanding sphere of government. (Rom. 8:2)

3. *America’s Heritage of Christian Character* is maintained when the attributes of God and His Son so mark the affections and actions of Christians, in conflict and contrast with the carnal world, that they express the same principle of Christian character revealed in the lives of the Pilgrims and Patriots.

4. “*Conscience is the Most Sacred of All Property*” sums up the traditional American conviction that the Christian citizen’s most precious possession is his internal God-given sense of right and wrong, of the ultimate lawfulness or unlawfulness of his own actions and affections. He also has a God-given right to own external property, and a Christian responsibility for its stewardship.

5. *The Christian Form of Our Government* is revealed when we discover that America’s civil government grew out of Biblical Law and the Gospel. The Biblical principles of self-government, conscience as property, and voluntary union gave rise to a Christian Republic based upon individual representation, separation of powers and federalism in both the states and the nation.

6. *How the Seed of Local Self-Government is Planted* is seen in America’s Christian History: individuals planted and preserved the seed of Christian self-government and enjoyed the fruits of local sovereignty by teaching and practicing — in each sphere of local government — industry, charity and obedience to all laws

not contrary to the Biblical principles of truth and righteousness.

7. *The Christian Principle of American Political Union* is the Biblical principle of voluntarism, which shows that God wants His children to cooperate and work together politically, commercially and in meeting community needs through voluntary consent, without compromising a Christian conscience or Scriptural separation.

Modern day Christians can agree with our Founding Fathers on the definition of the word *principle* in Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language: "The source, origin or cause of a thing; that from which a thing proceeds." The more deeply contemporary Christians probe America's Christian history, turning to authentic source materials which are now readily available in the compilations by Verna M. Hall, the more confirmation they will find that an array of Biblical principles truly were "the source, origin or cause" of America's original philosophy of education and government.

And the more Christians today study America's Christian history — which for a century has been obscured and untaught — the more evidence they will see that this type of Biblical reasoning is indeed America's historic method of reasoning which distinguished the educational philosophy of learning of colonial Americans and which subsequently, under God's Providence, produced America's Christian history and, finally, its Constitution.

The Holy Scriptures and God's Providence, working in the hearts and minds of the American colonists — many of them earnest born-again Christians — produced the Principle Approach; and in turn, the Principle Approach, as a method of Biblical reasoning, produced these seven principles of America's Christian history and government.

Occupy Till I Come

By the grace of God, this approach will be used by today's Christians, as the Lord tarries, to ful-

fill the command to "occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13), and to restore this Republic to its Gospel purpose: to spread the Gospel and its implications for both individual Christian liberty and the resulting civil liberty to *all nations* of the world and enable them to testify to the dominion or sovereignty of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The more the Principle Approach is understood and applied in contemporary America, the more God will be glorified. The more widely this approach is grasped and put to work by today's Christians, the more evidence we will see of American renewal, or the restoration of our Republic.

As vast numbers of unsaved Americans begin to perceive that this Bible-based Principle Approach — the application of Biblical wisdom to our educational and governmental choices and actions, and the solving of our social problems — comes directly from the Word of God, and meets urgent human needs which no worldly wisdom knows how to meet, they will have more reason to respect the supernatural wisdom of Christ and Biblical Christianity, and to turn to the Lord to be saved.

The more any individual studies the Principle Approach, the more reason he will have to search the Scriptures, and the more he will learn of the vastness of Biblical truth, and of its remarkable relevance to a surprisingly wide range of subjects and aspects of life, including his own spiritual growth.

For example, the more anyone thoughtfully pursues the Principle Approach, the more he will learn about the real nature of government, of "the government that shall be upon His shoulder," upon the shoulder of the Prince of Peace, and the more he will understand why Isaiah said (Isa. 9:6-7) "of the *increase* of His government and peace there shall be no end." In particular, the Christian who studies this approach will find that the same spiritual process that produces a self-governing *citizen* — learning how to know and do the will of God, and to be absolutely governed by Him — is inseparable from the process that produces a

saint, i.e., a sanctified mature Christian.

Preparing the Free and Independent Individual

This approach enables the individual to *think governmentally*, that is, to think in terms of "who" or "what" is controlling, restraining, directing or regulating; to discern whether the operations of government (direction, regulation, control, restraint) are being confirmed by, and exercised with, the operations of education. It compels one to ask, "Who is governing, first, internally—from the heart or mind?" Then, "Who is governing externally, in social and civil activities?"

The Honorable Robert Charles Winthrop (1809-1894), Massachusetts orator and legislator, explained why American Christians should think governmentally:

All societies of men must be governed in some way or other. The less they may have of stringent State Government, the more they must have of individual self-government. The less they rely on public law or physical force, the more they must rely on private moral restraint. Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled, either by a power within them, or by a power without them; either by the Word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible, or by the bayonet.¹

This approach enables the individual to extend Biblical principles of government and the doctrine of Providence into every sphere of life, that in all things Christ, the living Word of God, may have the pre-eminence, the rightful place, power and influence.

The 4 R'S

In method, the Principle Approach begins by restoring the four "R's" to teaching and learning.

RESEARCHING: studying God's Word to identify basic principles of life and living, and those principles which govern the "how" and "what" in teaching.

REASONING: reasoning from these Biblical principles so as to

identify them for the student in each subject of the curriculum.

RELATING: expounding to each student the Bible Truth in the subjects of the curriculum; relating the truths of God's Word to individual Christian character, self-government and stewardship of God's gifts.

RECORDING: the use of writing, by both teacher and student, to account for and elucidate the way in which these principles are being applied to life and living, as well as to a given subject.

Seven Distinctions

The Principle Approach is distinguished from other approaches to education in at least seven ways:

1. It demonstrates that the history of Christianity and the history of America and her form of government cannot, and should not, be separated.
2. It restores our heritage of Christian scholarship and Biblical reasoning and writing which were characteristic of the Founding Father generation.
3. It brings both the student and the subjects of the curriculum into harmony with, and in subjection to, Biblical Truths.
4. It produces a unity of spirit and principle with a diversity of teachers and subjects, without denying the identity or individuality of either the subjects or the teacher in the home or school.
5. It helps identify the vocabulary and rudiments of a subject, both Biblically and historically, and recovers the Biblical origin and purpose of a subject in every grade level of education.
6. It unifies the Biblical principles of a subject with its correlative ideas and facts.
7. It enables both parent and teacher to produce the Christian character and scholarship necessary to support a Christian Republic, to separate from progressive and secular methods, and avoid producing a character ripe for governmental socialism and religious modernism.

Numerous Christian homes, churches, and schools throughout America have accepted the challenge and the responsibility to restore the Principle Approach and to implement it in the curriculum.

American Christians are urged to personally identify and document *Biblically, governmentally, educationally, and historically*, each of the seven principles of America's Christian history and government.

It took 1620 years from the birth of Christ, as the Chain of Christianity moved westward, before the seeds of Christian self-government, property, and unity and union were planted in America with the Pilgrim settlement. Then, for over 150 years, Colonial Christians used Biblical research, reasoning, relating and recording to produce an independent, Constitutional Federal Republic — one nation under God.

This calibre of Biblical reasoning must prevail again in order to restore what "the locusts have eaten" (Joel 2:25) through our own forgetfulness and ignorance. It will require a willingness on the part of Christian leaders to "Remember His marvelous works that He hath done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth;" (1 Chr. 16:12), to patiently, "with all readiness of mind search" the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11) "that in all things" education and civil government as well, "He might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18)

America's Biblical Education

The Need For This Philosophy

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. (2 Cor 13:5)

Where is one to find the philosophy or wisdom to exercise the functions of education — to instruct, discipline, enlighten, correct, form and fit? There can be only two choices for the source of such wisdom: God, as revealed in the Bible, or man. As Christians, we look to the Word of God to reveal "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of

God" (1 Cor. 1:24) as the source and origin of our philosophy of education.

Occasionally a thunderbolt is needed to awaken Christians to examine whether their philosophy and methods are of Christ, and advancing His pre-eminence. Such a summons is issued by Miss Katherine Dang:

In ignorance, Christians are aiding and abetting anti-Christianity in America. More than any other factor, it is the weakness of Christian character and scholarship that is responsible for this country's apostasy from its founding Christian principles of education, government and economics. The pagan remains true to paganism. Spiritual backsliding is a believer's trait, not a pagan's. The dissolution of Christian character has resulted from generations of unbiblical education among Christian institutions of teaching and learning.

Christians are duped to believe that the "forces without" are mightier and inevitable; thus they isolate themselves, calling it separation, only to breed more cowards after their own kind.² The battle is within; the enemy is within the camp; that enemy is American Christianity's own ignorance to effect superior spiritual armaments.

Impotent and unequipped to supplant or displace, Christians tacitly consent to creeping socialistic politics in their own institutions: homes, churches, and schools, advancing the kingdom of Satan.

The need is for a soul-searching of content and methods in pastoring and teaching, to consider their implications for home, church, school and state.

The need is for a generation of American Christians who know God and His Word, and by their own scholarship know how to implement their knowledge. It is the duty of Christian educators to lead in advance of their students, not only to stem the tide of anti-Christian socialism, but to seek an effective alternative in schooling parents, pastors, businessmen, and statesmen. American Christianity must first sanctify itself before this nation can be purged of her enemies and reclaimed for Christ.

One of the aims of Christian education should be a Biblical mentality by which every sphere of activity is controlled. This mentality stems from a schooling in Biblical principles

able to detect and reject everything contrary to Christ and Christianity.

It was the Biblical reasoning of the Founding Father generation that produced the only historical alternative to tyranny and oppression of the individual, and which promoted the fullest expression of Christian liberty, rather than pagan license. The Biblical principles that founded America provided for unhindered propagation of the Gospel. Wisdom thus encourages Christians today to identify Biblical principles of civil government as a foundation of their warfare against secular humanistic reasoning.

There are multitudes of principles within the Biblical realm, but not all such principles are applicable to extending Christianity's influence from the individual all the way into a nation's civil government. A comprehensive philosophy of education should include such a body of truth. These truths should govern every teacher in each class and department. Then, all that is effected in the Christian school or Sunday School would issue from a common spirit and vision.

The greatest of these effects would be individuals equipped to walk independently with their God in a perverse and wicked generation.

The strength of an institution, be it church school, Sunday School, club, missions committee, etc., lies largely in the unity of its constituents. Bound by an American Christian philosophy, a great bulwark would be raised for the church to advance Christ and His cause in our Jerusalem, and then to the uttermost parts of the world.³ . . .

How to Think Governmentally

Bible-believing people in all nations are encouraged to receive Jesus Christ not only as their Saviour but as the Lord who rules their lives. Born-again men and women everywhere are urged by Scripture to let their minds and hearts be governed by God, to be ever on guard, assessing what it is that seeks to control them, whether the Word and Spirit of God or the insinuations of Satan. *Thus, to some degree, Christians the world over are directed to think governmentally — to be alert to what is governing or controlling first, inter-*

nally in their own thought-life, and then externally in what is governing their daily domestic, social, political, educational, and economic experience.

But in traditional American Christian education there was always a special emphasis upon thinking *governmentally* — i.e., in terms of the flow of power and force. Who or what is in control internally and externally? Is God or Satan in control of our thoughts? Is civil government or individual self government directing our actions? Unfortunately, however, we do not find that inspired emphasis in most Christian homes, churches or schools today.

Contemporary Christian education is supposed to be at the leading edge of the movement to advance Christ, Christian liberty (salvation) and Christian truth; but for a great many years it has lacked the necessary correlative of true Christian liberty — the clearly, precisely-stated and boldly emphasized Christian idea of *government*.

When government is taught in most Christian homes and schools today, the emphasis is upon the external, the political functions, the machinery and the men who make, administer and judge the civil law. As necessary as this study is, it neglects the whole counsel of God concerning government, and the omission is dangerous.

To understand the constant presence and practice of the government of God on earth, to think governmentally, and to discern how one's philosophy of God, man and government constitutes one's philosophy of education, I believe the following ideas should be taught, illustrated and demonstrated:

1. God ordained three governmental institutions — the home, civil government and the church.
2. God ordained civil government for man's good, and not his harm.
3. The Christian idea of man is primary, and gives rise to the Christian idea of civil government, which protects man's God-given life, liberty and property.

4. A philosophy of education is based upon a philosophy of government, i.e., one's view of the principles of teaching and learning is determined by one's idea of who or what is exercising control and is the ultimate authority and source of Truth.

5. Every form of government is the result of a philosophy of education.

If Christian parents, educators and pastors omit — whether by ignorance or forgetfulness — the full expression of the Christian idea of God, man and government in America's history, our posterity will continue to be ill-equipped to detect and supplant wickedness on all levels of society and government, and will in their ignorance prevent the benefits of Christian liberty, self-government, private property and voluntary union from blessing this nation and subsequently all nations for Christ and Christianity. This ought not to be.

God's Three Divine Governmental Institutions

There are three God-ordained institutions, divinely constituted for man to administer according to God's Law. Chronologically, they are the home or family (Gen. 2:24), civil government (Gen. 9:6), and the New Testament Church. (Matt. 16:18)

The home or family must be a Biblical institution with Biblical laws to govern it, if it is to be a Christian home. (Prov. 18:22, Heb. 13:4) Even if born-again Christian parents occupy the home, the government of that home is not Christian or Biblical unless the Will of God, i.e., His Law for the family, is administered and obeyed by Christian parents. (Col. 3:20; Gal. 4:1-2)

The family was established for the purpose of procreation with clearly defined governmental rules for the control and training of children. Its educational goal is to build Christian character that glorifies God and represents Christ and His plan and purpose for men and nations. (Deut. 6:6-7; Eph. 6:2,4; Prov. 22:6) According to God's Word, the education

of children is the *exclusive responsibility* of the parents, not the state.

The New Testament church was ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ and commanded by Him to evangelize and teach or disciple the nations. (Matt. 28:19-20) Even if born-again Christians occupy the pulpit and the pew, that local church is Christian or Biblical only if it governs itself according to God's "perfect law of liberty" — the Word of God. (Eph. 2:20-21; 5:24-27; 1 Tim. 3)

Christian education is a *ministry* of the local church (Matt. 28:19) in support of the Christian home, church and civil government. Christian education is not a function of the state nor subject to its control. The *educational* goal of the Christian church is to teach and perpetuate both the Law and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:18-19) To the extent it does this, it will develop the Christian conscience and character to support a Christian Republic.

God Ordained Civil Government For Our Good

Civil government was ordained by God. (Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:1) God made the individual citizen responsible for the functions, conduct and quality of the administration of those men who exercised the God-given authority or power to fulfill God's purpose for civil government. The Biblical purposes of civil government include:

1. Being the "minister of God" — a servant of God — "to thee for good," not our harm. (Rom. 13:4)
2. Valuing (praising) and protecting individual God-given (not government granted) life, liberty and property so we can prayerfully "lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (1 Tim. 2:1-3)
3. Executing "wrath upon evil doers" and administering the death penalty upon convicted murderers in civil society. (Rom. 13:4; Gen. 9:6)

Civil government can be called Christian if the form or arrangement of its functions and parts is Biblical. It is emphatically Christian, of course, if the participants — citizens

and officials — are expressing Christian self-government, character, stewardship of property, and voluntary union and relating these principles to their political decisions and actions. Note, however, that even if "born again" Christians exercise the functions of government — legislative, executive, judicial — *the consequences of their administration may not be Christian unless the individual is governed by the Biblical idea of God, man and government.*

The Christian vs. Pagan View of Man and Government

Ideas or "images in the mind" have their consequences because the internal is causative of the external. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7) The people's idea of God determines the form of their civil, political, religious and social institutions, and that idea of God must necessarily include man and government.⁴

Consult the chart below on how the Christian idea of God and man gives rise to a Biblical view of government. The premise behind this

chart is that if one accepts the Christian idea of man in the left column, his internal idea will tend to produce the Christian idea and form of civil government expressed in the right column. Pages 1 and 2 of *Christian History of the Constitution* also contrast the pagan versus Christian idea of man and government.

A chart on the next page identifies the pagan view of man and government. The pagan view of man, which is first embraced within the internal, causative sphere of thought, manifests itself and effects its own form and quality of external government.

A Philosophy of Education Is a Philosophy of Government

What one believes about God, man, and government constitutes a philosophy of education.

What relationship does one's view of God and man have to one's philosophy of education? The answer would be self-evident, except many Christians believe that their statement of faith is *sacred* and their philosophy of education is *secular*.

The Christian Idea of Man and Government

Christian Idea of Man

Internal
(Causative)

1. By the law of God, all mortal men have sinned and need a Saviour: man's nature is corrupted.
2. God created individuals with an independent, distinct and special value; man is equal before God's law and love.
3. Liberty is first internal and spiritual as God governs man by the Holy Spirit through the "perfect law of liberty." (Jas. 1:25)
4. Christian self-government is God governing by the consent or supernatural response of the governed.
5. As Christ represents saved man before God, so man is God's representative on earth. Christianity is representative in its doctrine and essence.
6. Man exercises all three God-ordained functions of self-government and "shall be judged by the law of liberty." (Jas. 2:12)
7. God's government is by covenant with Christ and man's supernatural voluntary consent. Divine authority is delegated and flows from God to man under God's law.

Christian Idea of Government

External
(Effect)

1. Civil government is ordained of God to restrain sinful man and to "praise" or value those that do good.
2. Man is superior to the state he constructs to protect his God-given value. Men are equal before the laws they make.
3. Christian (spiritual) liberty of conscience gave rise to religious, civil and economic freedom protected by law.
4. Christian civil government is a reflection of Christian self-government and local self-governing homes, churches and communities.
5. Christian civil government is representative of the governmental spirit and form of its constituent homes, churches and schools.
6. The three functions of civil government are separated and limited by "settled, known and established laws" consistent with God's moral law.
7. Christian civil government is a voluntary compact between consenting citizens; political power flows from self-governing men to elected representatives limited by law.

Such a belief is not Biblical. (Prov. 1: 1-7; Psa. 2:10-12)

Christ and Christianity should not be separated from why, how, and what is taught. A school's philosophy of education must be consistent with its doctrinal statement of faith.

The relation between education and government is discerned by reasoning governmentally. The term government has traditionally been reserved for political or civil functions, but if we think of the idea of government in a more philosophical way, we can see it has broader applications, and is indeed related to education.

Study carefully the definitions of the words "govern" and "government" from Webster's 1828 Dictionary or as reprinted on pages 184-185 of *Teaching and Learning*. Consider the relationship between the functions of government — by definition, to direct, regulate, control, restrain — and the functions of education, by definition to instruct, discipline, enlighten, correct, form, and fit. The moment a teacher steps into the classroom to educate he is going to express *who* or *what* is governing him and *how* and *by what authority* the curriculum will be taught.

Consider that there are three basic functions of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. A Christian teacher exercises these three functions of government whenever a subject — any subject — is taught. He plans (prepares), executes (presents), and judges the propriety of the lesson plan and presentation by the governmental principles of God's Word. Self-education requires self-government.

The source and origin of the *wisdom* applied in exercising these three functions of government in education determines one's philosophy of education. Every subject has a philosophy of government at its base. Either one reasons from, hence is governed by, the Word of God, and lays Christ, the supreme Governor (Psa. 22:28; Isa. 9:7) "at the foundation of all sound knowledge and learning," — or man, his reason and imagination are in control.

Webster's definition of education suggests how education deals with the government of the inward man: his understanding, temper, and manners and habits (i.e., character). The Christian view of government conceives government as first internal, causative, then external, with Christian civil government the effect as each individual acknowledges the

sovereignty of God through Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Education is first an internal activity and is governed by whatever body of wisdom or knowledge the individual accepts as his authority. Thus, as the home is the first sphere of civil government, so the classroom is a correlative sphere of civil government. These relationships are seldom acknowledged.

Consider how Christian education determines and constructs the character of both self- and civil government. (See *Teaching and Learning*, pp. 106-108) When an individual or a nation is *increasing* in the knowledge and application of the Word of God, there will be an increasing *reliance* upon the indwelling Spirit and government of God through Christ for every human need. In contrast, when an individual or nation is *decreasing* in a knowledge of the Word of God, there will be increasing reliance on the external, upon man and civil government for one's needs.

If the individual is not specifically identifying and expressing the Christian view of man and government in every area of life and living, then he is liable to be used as a tool of anti-Christian, humanistic ignorance. (Rom. 6:16) Christian government is elementary, simple in statement, but difficult to live out. Human government, divorced from God's Word, is complex, complicated and difficult in its statement, but in one sense simple for the individual to live under — i.e., while bureaucratic regulations and paperwork may not seem simple, under either a totalitarian government or in anarchy, the citizen is relieved of the difficult challenges of Christian self-government.

The scriptures were intended by God to be the guide of human reason. The Creator of man established the moral order of the Universe; knowing that human reason, left without a divine guide or rule of action, would fill the world with disorder, crime and misery. . . .

The principles of all genuine liberty, and of wise laws and administrations are to be drawn from the Bible and sustained by its authority. The man therefore who weakens

The Pagan Idea of Man and Government

Pagan Idea of Man

INTERNAL
(Causative)

1. Man is a higher form of animal, a product of evolution.
2. Man is incomplete, having neither a whole nor distinct existence, but is a temporal, passing species having no identity with the past or with the future.
3. The stronger of the species survive and adapt.
4. Man appears to move up the chain of sophistication: from polytheism to monotheism, from monotheism to eventual atheism.
5. Man is a social creature and being with the "herd instinct" for his livelihood and security.

Pagan Idea of Government

EXTERNAL
(Effect)

1. Man is governed according to animal, natural, physical instincts.
2. Man is governed according to the moment, the current fashion, the present, without vision and foresight, only to be gradually conditioned to circumstances.
3. Man is governed by a supreme elite in an inequitable society organized to eliminate the weak or nonconformist; he has no liberty of conscience; might makes right by the rule of the majority; society legislates, not representatives under law.
4. Man is governed according to man's primary need: welfare for the physical, material existence in the Welfare State.
5. Man is governed by a search for the benevolent dictator to lead the group or collective; union is by force.

or destroys the divine authority of that book may be accessory to all the public disorders which society is doomed to suffer.⁵

Every Form of Government Has Its Philosophy of Education

As one learns to think governmentally, one's conscious concept of government shapes one's philosophy of education. Reasoning from cause to effect, an internal governmental view of education directs the individual in what to teach, and how to teach. The effect of a philosophy of government and education will be manifested as the practical form and quality of education and subsequently of civil government. This same idea is illustrated in the diagram below entitled "Every Form of Government Has Its Philosophy of Education."

Reasoning governmentally from effect back to cause, every form of government and every form of education has its philosophy of education and government. For example, socialism has a form and philosophy of education predicated upon man's autonomous control and authority separate from God. Consider what philosophy and form of education the communists in either Russia or mainland China insist upon to sustain pagan, totalitarian government. In contrast consider what philosophy of government and education produced the world's first Christian Republic in America.

America's Biblical Education produced America's Christian History and Constitution. The method was the Principle Approach. Let us restore the foundation of American Independence.⁶

The Providential View of History

The American Christian philosophy of education and government is predicated upon the teaching of the Providential view of history. The imperative for restoring this Biblical view of history into the Christian curriculum and the consequences for Christians and American Christianity if it is ignored are compellingly advanced by Miss Verna M. Hall:

Young American Christians know something of Christ's saving grace as the central theme of Christianity, but know little, so very little about how God brought forth this nation, America, for His purpose and for His glory. It is tragic, and an indictment upon Christian education for many years past, that so many American Christians know almost nothing about the Hand of God in America. The young people in our Christian colleges are at the peak of their youthful idealism, and yet, by and large they have never heard of the Hand of God in relation to America, and therefore have no real love for America and her uniquely Christian institutions. If they do not know the Hand of God in our nation's past, how can they be sure of it in the present, or the future? As a consequence, they would not know how important they are to God in respect to His government of men and nations, nor would they know what a responsibility they have, not only to those sacrificing Christians who have gone before, but to themselves and to their own posterity. Most young Christians want to have a goal toward which they can work with God's help; they want to have a purpose and a hope. But if they have not been taught the Hand of God in history, they enter the work-a-day world not realizing

their importance as Christians in directing the course of human events. They will not think it important to make decisions predicated upon Biblical principles of government in all fields of endeavor, for they will assume they are Christians in a secular world governed by secular rules and concepts. Somehow, somehow in the last one hundred years particularly, America and Christianity have become separated in the mind and heart of the Christian, and he now lives in two worlds, the Christian inner world, and the secular outer world; whereas the Pilgrim and the Puritan lived in one world, the world of God, the creator of heaven and earth, and all that therein is ... (emphasis added)

The American Christian seldom thinks of America in the way the Pilgrims, the Puritans and the founding fathers of our nation thought. Instead, he has divided himself into two major categories, outside of denominationalism, for this two-fold division runs right through all denominations. I might describe the division I mean in this way; one side is known for attempting to make Christianity more human, and more like secular institutions in attempting to solve our national problems. Indeed it is difficult to tell where this type of Christianity leaves off and good humanism begins. The other group have become so concerned with endeavoring to defend the faith itself, that they have withdrawn almost completely from the affairs of man in his daily walk. What is the result? The age-old tactic of Satan is to divide and conquer, and because of this division Christianity is no longer the leading influence in this nation, but is rather the follower of secularism, or the mere critics of worldliness. Forgetting or forsaking the Hand of God in history, forgetting

Every Form of Government Has Its Philosophy of Education

INTERNAL (Causative) →

← EXTERNAL (Effect)

Philosophy of Government

determines→

Philosophy of Education

produces→

Form and Quality of Education

shapes→

Form and Quality of Government

(the source of authority or power)

(the wisdom in teaching and learning)

(The practice and product of education)

(the form and functions of government)

that God does rule in the affairs of men, forgetting or forsaking the Word of God as our American political textbook, our economic textbook, our social, cultural, educational textbook; this alone has produced the results we have in our nation today.⁷ (emphasis added)

Who causes the human events which have taken place through the centuries, God or man? We have only these two choices. The humanist or atheist knows that man is causative. The secular textbook sets forth the facts of a subject in its causal relations, making man the cause — politically, sociologically, economically, ethnologically, etc. Should Christian educational institutions do the same? I submit they should not; they should structure all of their subjects from the providential approach, "God's Causal relations," and write their own course content and textbooks.⁸ (emphasis added)

The Providential View of history is important because it is true, because it is Biblical, and because it challenges and supplants the prevailing secular social studies approach to history and government. The curric-

ula of most schools and colleges omit this emphasis. Furthermore, understanding the Hand of God makes the lessons of history immediately individual and implants hope into the daily life of the teacher and student in the home, church, or school.

Notes

1. Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Bible Society, Boston, May 1849; *The Christian History of the American Revolution*, Consider and Ponder, p. 20.

2. There is, of course, a Biblical basis for separation—ecclesiastically, morally and socially (II Cor. 6: 14-18), but the emphasis here is on false isolation in the name of separation. The principle is discussed in more detail under *The Christian Principle of American Political Union*, p. 69.

3. Katherine Dang, *A Sunday School Manual for the Oakland Chinese Bible Church*, December, 1977. Unpublished.

4. Verna M. Hall, Preface to *Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America*, p. II.

5. Noah Webster, "Preface to the Holy Bible...", *Consider and Ponder*, p. 21 b,d.

6. Rosalie J. Slater, *Teaching and Learning*, p. 89.

7. Verna M. Hall, Excerpts from an address to the First Pilgrim Seminar, Plymouth, Mass., Nov. 18, 1971.

8. Ibid., Excerpt from an address to the Second Pilgrim Seminar, November 18, 1972.

The *Providential Perspective* is a regular publication of the Providence Foundation and contains contemporary writings or excerpts from historical documents which focus on the relationship between God and history or Christianity and culture. It is sent to members of the Foundation, those people who financially support this ministry.

The Providence Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization whose mission is to spread Christian liberty among the nations by educating them in a biblical worldview. For more information:

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